



**PIRBILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**50 CFR Part 665**

**RIN 0648-XG025**

**Pacific Island Pelagic Fisheries; 2018 U.S. Territorial Longline  
Bigeye Tuna Catch Limits for the Commonwealth of the Northern  
Mariana Islands**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Announcement of a valid specified fishing agreement.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces a valid specified fishing agreement that allocates up to 1,000 metric tons (t) of the 2018 bigeye tuna limit for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to identified U.S. longline fishing vessels. The agreement supports the long-term sustainability of fishery resources of the U.S. Pacific Islands, and fisheries development in the CNMI.

**DATES:** The specified fishing agreement is valid on November 6, 2018.

**ADDRESSES:** NMFS prepared environmental analyses that describe the potential impacts on the human environment that would result from the action. The analyses, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2018-0026, are available from

<https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS-2018-0026>, or from Michael D. Tosatto, Regional Administrator, NMFS Pacific Islands Region (PIR), 1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg. 176, Honolulu, HI 96818.

The Fishery Ecosystem Plan for Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific (Pelagic FEP) is available from the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813, tel 808-522-8220, fax 808-522-8226, or <http://www.wpcouncil.org>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Rebecca Walker, NMFS PIRO Sustainable Fisheries, 808-725-5184.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In a final rule published on October 23, 2018, NMFS specified a 2018 limit of 2,000 t of longline-caught bigeye tuna for the U.S. Pacific Island territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the CNMI (83 FR 53399). NMFS allows each territory to allocate up to 1,000 t of the 2,000 t limit to U.S. longline fishing vessels identified in a valid specified fishing agreement.

On October 22, 2018, NMFS received from the Council a specified fishing agreement between the CNMI and Quota Management, Inc. (QMI). The Council's Executive Director advised that the specified fishing agreement was consistent with the criteria set forth in 50 CFR 665.819(c)(1). NMFS reviewed the agreement and determined that it is consistent with the Pelagic

FEP, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, implementing regulations, and other applicable laws.

In accordance with 50 CFR 300.224(d) and 50 CFR 665.819(c) (9), vessels identified in the agreement may retain and land bigeye tuna in the western and central Pacific Ocean under the CNMI limit. NMFS will begin attributing bigeye tuna caught by vessels identified in the agreement to the CNMI starting on October 25, 2018. If NMFS determines that the fishery will reach the attribution limit of 1,000 t, we will restrict the retention of bigeye tuna caught by vessels identified in the agreement, unless the vessels are included in a subsequent specified fishing agreement with another U.S. territory.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: November 1, 2018.

---

Karen H. Abrams,  
Acting Director,  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2018-24278 Filed: 11/6/2018 8:45 am; Publication Date: 11/7/2018]